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ABSTRACT

This report explains that all adults must watch out for all children, cautioning that marketing is harmful to children. Advertisers are aggressively targeting age groups that, until recently, have been considered off-limits and occupying more of children's psychic and physical space. The report presents a commitment by mothers to all children to reassert themselves and their values in the lives of children, deconstruct advertising messages, make homes and families commercial-free, reach out to fellow citizens, make schools commercial-free zones, support companies that support their mission, and work for public policies that adequately protect all children. It urges advertisers to endorse a Mother's Code which bans advertising/marketing in schools or to children under age 8, product placement in movies and media for children and teens, behavioral science research to develop advertising/marketing for children and teens, and advertising/marketing for children and teens that promotes an ethic of selfishness and instant gratification. This report explains: "Why Mothers Join Together"; "The Money World and the Motherworld"; "What You Are Doing to Our Children"; "Using Manipulative Tactics"; "The Harm to Our Children"; "Why We Raise Our Voices as Mothers"; "Our Pledge"; and "Our Next Steps." (Contains 127 endnotes.) (SM)

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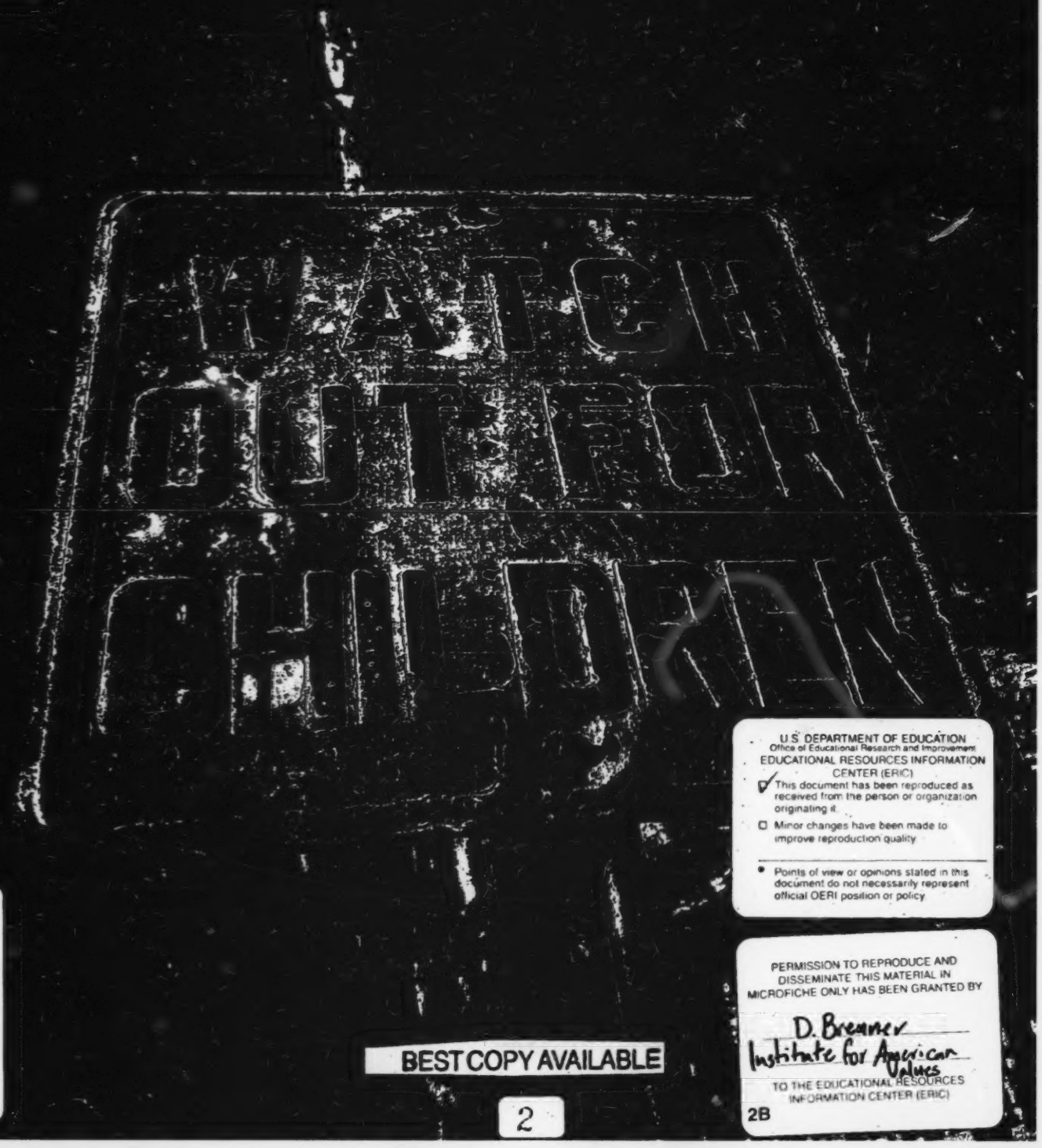
The Motherhood Project
Institute for American Values

Watch Out for Children

A Mothers' Statement to Advertisers



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This consensus statement comes from the Motherhood Project of the Institute for American Values. The mission of the Motherhood Project is to put the importance of motherhood on the national agenda and to foster a renewed sense of purpose, passion, and power in the vocation of mothering. The Institute wishes to express its gratitude to The Bodman Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation, the Woodshouse Foundation, and The New York Community Trust — The Barton M. and Judith Lund Biggs Fund for their generous support of this project. The contributions of an anonymous donor and other supporters are also greatly appreciated.

Readers who would like to join in this statement can do so by visiting its website at *www.rebelmothers.org*.

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Watch Out for Children
A Mothers' Statement to Advertisers

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Executive Summary

THE LINE WAS DRAWN on Mother's Day 2000, the start of the four-day meeting of the 12th Annual "Consumer Kids" Conference held in Palm Beach, Florida. Of all days to launch a "consumer kids" conference, this group chose the day set aside to honor mothers. The symbolism could not have been more powerful. It brought into stark relief the fact that advertisers and marketers are, intentionally or not, bidding to substitute their values — *your* values — for the values that mothers try to teach their children.

We are caregivers and nurturers of children. We come from varying walks of life and professions and we hold differing political perspectives. We are united, however, in the view that you are harming our children and that you must stop.

We do not believe that you intend to harm our children. We do not hold you solely responsible for the harm to our children. We admit that we have not done all that we could and should do to protect our children, and that there is much more that we must do.

We raise our voices to help breathe new life into simple common sense notions: *all adults must watch out for children; all adults, from parents to business leaders, must watch what they do and say in front of children.*

For us, our children are priceless gifts. For you, our children are customers, and childhood is a "market segment" to be exploited. We are alarmed by the mounting evidence, including our own experiences, showing that marketing to children is harming them. In pursuit of the market for children and youth, you are aggressively extending your reach, going after age groups that until recently have been considered off limits, and occupying more and more of our children's psychic and physical space. (See pages 12-17). Using the powerful tools of the behavioral sciences, and a range of powerful media technologies, you are aggressively targeting babies and toddlers, and pursuing our children wherever they go. (See pages 17-19). The line between *meeting* and *creating* consumer needs and desires is increasingly being crossed, as your battery of highly trained and creative experts study, analyze, persuade, and manipulate our children. The evidence of harm to our children's physical, cognitive, and social health, to their values, and to their emotional well-being is overwhelming. (See pages 20-23).

We make the following commitments to the children we nurture and to each other (See pages 24-27):

1) To look inward and work to change ourselves. We will strive to lead less media-driven, work-driven, and consumption-driven lives.
2) To reassert ourselves and our values in the lives of our children. We will teach our children self-discipline, empathy, moderation, and other values that will help them resist the messages of marketing.
3) To be informed and to deconstruct advertising and marketing messages. We will work to deepen our children's understanding of the strategies used by marketers.
4) To make our homes and families commerce-free zones. To the degree that we are able, we will limit our children's exposure to advertising and marketing.

5) To reach out to our fellow citizens. We will join with our neighbors to form communities of resistance to fight the pull of marketing in our lives.
6) To make our schools commercial-free zones. We will work to ensure that there is no advertising, marketing, or market research in our children's schools.
7) To support companies that support us and refuse to support those that do not. We will find out which companies are supporting us and which are not, and we will make our purchasing decisions accordingly.
8) To work for public policies that adequately protect our children. We join in the spirit of the "Golden Marble" protest against the awards program honoring the "best" advertisements and promotional campaigns aimed at children. (See page 27). We join in the spirit of Commercial Alert's 1999 letter urging Congress to restore the Federal Trade Commission's authority "to enact solutions" to the excessive commercialization of our children's lives "before it gets worse." (See page 27).

We urge advertisers to endorse as minimum standards, the following *Mothers' Code for Advertisers* (See pages 28-29):

Mothers' Code for Advertisers

1) No advertising, marketing, or market research in schools, including high schools.

2) No targeting of advertising and marketing at children under the age of 8.

3) No product placement in movies and media programs targeted at children and adolescents.

4) No behavioral science research to develop advertising and marketing aimed at children and adolescents.

5) No advertising and marketing directed at children and adolescents that promote an ethic of selfishness and a focus on instant gratification.

6) Good faith efforts to reduce sponsorship of gratuitously sexual and/or violent programming likely to be watched by children.

WE CALL UPON ALL MOTHERS to join in this quest to "watch out for children." Together, we will say to anyone who would exploit our children, "No, you won't. If you want to get to our children, you will have to go through us."

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Why We Join Together

WE WHO BEAR CHILDREN, we who care for and raise them, declare ourselves in rebellion against a popular culture that is waging war on our children. At stake is the idea of childhood. At stake, ultimately, is our humanity.

Much of this war is being waged, intentionally or not, by you, advertisers, and the wide range of agencies you employ. We do not believe that you intend to harm our children. Perhaps you do not recognize that you are harming them. But you *are* harming them with such growing intensity, and with such grave consequences for their well-being, that we have no choice but to challenge you directly as a vital step in reversing the tide that has turned against our children. That is why this mothers' statement — this open letter — is addressed to you.

The war's many manifestations share one common feature: a growing willingness to sacrifice the best interests of our children for the sake of money. In your desire to sell your goods and services, you seem to be erasing all limits on what you will do and say in front of our children.

In the increasingly intense competition for what advertising people call "share of mind," the driving messages are "You deserve a break today," "Have it your way," "Follow your instincts. Obey your thirst," "Just Do It," "No Boundaries," "Got The Urge?" These are just a few of the many formulations of what has become the dominant message of advertising and marketing: that life is about selfishness, instant gratification, and materialism.

These values are at odds with the values we try to teach our children, values essential for civilized life: that children should care about others, that they should be able to govern themselves, and that there is more to life than material things.

We see the assault on our children in the unrelieved affront to their senses and their spirits nearly everywhere they go. We see it in the incessant advertising and marketing beamed into our homes through radio, television, cable, and the Internet, and surrounding our children on billboards, in magazines, and in other media in schools and in our neighborhoods. We see it in the ways that you target children at younger and younger ages with increasingly sophisticated advertisements designed to cultivate as early as possible a restless and insatiable appetite for wanting and buying things.

Entertainment Weekly, a leading magazine of popular culture, was recently moved to ask: "Are there no limits?... Filth, raunch, violence, & hate rule pop culture — has showbiz finally gone too far?... And do audiences even care anymore?"[1]

We care. We are caregivers and nurturers of children. We come from varying walks of life and professions, many different places, and we hold differing political perspectives. We are joined, however, by our determination to protect our children. We are united in the view that you are harming our children and that you must stop.

We do not hold you solely responsible for the harm to our children. We admit that we have not done all that we could and should do to protect them, and that there is much more that we must do. We commit to doing our part. We expect you to do your part.

We are aware that many advertisers have adopted voluntary codes of conduct to govern their affairs, that not all advertisers contribute to this problem to the same degree, and

that some advertising promotes positive values. But it is clear to us that our children need and deserve a much greater degree of protection.

We know that the challenges facing America's children are the result of a multitude of forces. We are well aware that you are not alone in the pursuit of commercial gain that is so characteristic of our age. As the economist Robert Kuttner has put it, "the market is overtaking areas that once operated on the basis of other principles."[2] This trend is part and parcel of a growing and increasingly globalized economy that recognizes few boundaries and in which "five multimedia conglomerates... exert unprecedented power in marketing messages and products to young people."[3]

We are united in the view that you are harming our children and that you must stop.

Against this backdrop, the nation also faces a crisis of values as adults of all backgrounds seem to have joined in the spirit of the day, focusing primarily on their own self-interest and the gratification of their individual wants and desires. We are, all of us, caught up in a powerful market-driven value system.

As advertisers, you may believe that you are merely riding this wave. But because you are responsible for the advertisements and sponsor the programs that tell the tales that shape and magnify our culture's prevailing values, you have become the chief storytellers of our age. A society's stories help to shape its people, particularly its young people. You therefore bear a special ethical responsibility.

Yet you seem to us to be increasingly unwilling to be responsible, to act with self-restraint, or to respect the boundaries that, until recently, protected the innocence of childhood. You seem to us to be indifferent to how your marketing decisions affect our children.

We raise our voices in the hope of promoting a greater sense of responsibility among mothers, fathers, and other caring adults — including those who lead your companies — for doing their part to set matters right for our children.

We raise our voices to help breathe new life into simple common sense notions: *all adults must watch out for children; all adults, from parents to business leaders, must watch what they do and say in front of children.*

The Money World and the Motherworld

FUNDAMENTALLY, WE FACE A CONFLICT OF VALUES. It is a conflict between the values of the money world[4] and the values of the "motherworld" — the values of commerce and the values required to raise healthy children.

We see one result of the conflict in the growing number of national surveys raising concerns about the state of our children's character. In 1998, for example, when *USA Today* asked parents whether they thought it was harder to raise children to be "good people" than it was in 1978, nearly nine out of 10 said yes. About three-fourths of the people polled said that TV, movies, and popular music are, on the whole, negative influences on children.[5] Another recent poll reveals that parents believe that marketing is making children too materialistic and damaging their values and worldview.[6]

The difference between the money world and the motherworld is the difference between means and ends. In the motherworld, children are ends in themselves. They are priceless gifts. We love them. We care for their dignity and for their character. We are concerned for their souls. In the money world, our children are primarily means to other ends. You want to maximize sales. For you, our children are customers, and childhood is a "market segment" to be exploited, a "demographic" for which you are competing.

In this conflict of values, you who see our children primarily as means to an end are winning. We, who nurture and guide the children, are losing. Everywhere we turn, we see the invasion of the motherworld by the money world. We see this trend in our daily struggles to teach our children to be patient, to be disciplined, and to respect family traditions. We find ourselves regularly undermined by the values that dominate our cultural environment — an environment that, like the air we breathe, we cannot escape.

WE ARE NOT PERSUADED, as many advertisers and marketers argue, that advertising and marketing are innocuous. We are alarmed by the mounting evidence of harm to our children, evidence confirmed by our own experiences. It seems to us that on the subject of marketing to children, what is good for your businesses is, on the whole, bad for our children.

We recognize that you love your own children, and no doubt try to protect them from the worst aspects of consumer culture. We suspect that, like us, you too are often torn as you struggle to balance the exigencies of the bottom line with your own concerns for the well-being of children. Many of us also work in the money world. But it is increasingly clear to us that the values of commerce should not be the values of our homes. We must all have sufficient space to teach our children the values of the motherworld before the money world touches them.

Of course, some degree of conflict between the values of the money world and the values of the motherworld is inevitable. We are mothers. You are business people. Our task is to nurture and guide our children. Your task is to sell things. What you do never will and never should be the same as what we do.

But today's conflict between the motherworld and the money world is unprecedented and has never been so destructive. And there has not been a time in recent memory when you have been so aggressive in your pursuits, with such apparent disregard for the well-being of children. Or a time when families have been so alone in our defense of our children. Or a time when our society has permitted you to act with such a sense of entitlement, with such indifference for the values of the motherworld, and with so little regard for the ethical, civic, and human consequences of your actions.

Our nemesis is not the marketplace. We agree that economic freedom is one of the foundations of democracy. Our nemesis is the value system that your advertising and marketing increasingly foster in our children. We mean the value system that promotes self-indulgence, assaults the idea of restraint, degrades human sexuality, promotes the notion that our identity is determined by what we buy, and forces us constantly to scale down our sensitivity to vulgarity, ugliness, and violence. There is nothing called "the market" that compels you to promote that value system.

For us, the line was drawn quite clearly on Mother's Day, May 14, 2000. That Sunday marked the start of the four-day meeting of the 12th Annual "Consumer Kids" Conference held in Palm Beach, Florida. Industry leaders convened, as they do each year, to network, have fun, and learn about the latest "trends, research, and marketing strategies" crucial to their kid campaigns. Very talented people spent four days participating in workshops designed to help them capture "the consumer kids market in the new millennium." They spent time learning about the "influence of schools in marketing to kids," how to "communicate to kids and moms in ways that eliminate the parental barriers to product trial," how to create "consumer intimacy," and "deciding if you should spend your media dollars against moms, kids, or both."[7]

The "watch out for children" signs reflected a broad societal consensus.

Of all days to launch a "consumer kids" conference, this group chose the day set aside to honor mothers. The symbolism could not have been more powerful. It brought into stark relief the fact that advertisers and marketers, intentionally or not, are bidding to substitute their values — *your* values — for the values that mothers try to teach their children.

We have been slow to respond to this challenge because, as mothers in a culture that does not truly value mothering, we have not always trusted our intuitions. In a world that privileges the voices of "experts," we have been hesitant to raise our voices as mothers. We have not been as attentive as we should have been to the need to safeguard our children. Sometimes we have left our children unattended.

No longer. We cannot allow the values of the money world to displace the values of the motherworld.

Our children are not for sale. We will watch out for children and we will insist that you do the same. Put to the choice of acquiescing in a value system that is causing profound harm to our children, or resisting, we choose resistance.

We are rebellious mothers.

What You Are Doing To Our Children

NOT TOO LONG AGO, the "watch out for children" signs so common on our nation's streets had profound meaning beyond the obvious concern for the lives of young pedestrians. Those signs reflected a broad societal consensus that children ought to have a childhood during which they are shielded from certain aspects of the adult world — especially those influences that could be harmful to their physical, psychological, and moral development. Underlying this consensus was the premise that children should be nurtured and guided in order to grow to be healthy, responsible, and virtuous adults. Also underlying this consensus was the idea that childhood should be a protected time.[8]

It was understood that families were primarily responsible for teaching and guiding children. But it was also assumed that other adults had important roles to play. It was thus expected that adults would exercise self-restraint around children. All adults were expected to "watch out for children" — to be concerned not just for their physical safety, but also

for the development of their minds and souls. Many adults took it upon themselves to guide and correct one another's children, and felt compelled to watch what they did and said in front of children.

Business institutions, too, were expected to be — and many *were* — deferential to parents and to childhood. Advertisers once did a far better job of "watching out for children." The National Association of Broadcasters' voluntary *Television Code*, which was adopted in 1952 and abolished thirty years later, required, among other things, that "in their totality, programs should contribute to the sound, balanced development of children to help them achieve a sense of the world at large and informed adjustments to their society."[9]

The *Code's* preamble said: "The advertisers who use television to convey their commercial messages also have a responsibility to the viewing audience. Their advertising messages should be presented in an honest, responsible, and tasteful manner." The *Code* further provided that "the broadcaster and the advertiser should exercise special caution with the content and presentation of television commercials placed in or near programs designed for children. Exploitation of children should be avoided. Commercials directed to children should in no way mislead as to the product's performance and usefulness."[10]

The *Code* pointed out that "because children are allowed to watch programs designed primarily for adults, broadcasters should take this practice into account in the presentation of material in such programs when children may constitute a substantial segment of the audience." The *Code* acknowledged that television is a social force that affects the "ability of the child to make the transition to adult society," and observed that a "child's training and experience during the formative years should include positive sets of values which will allow the child to become a responsible adult, capable of coping with the challenges of maturity."[11]

TODAY, TELEVISION AND OTHER MEDIA are even more compelling social forces than they were when the *Code* was in effect. Television and other media are commanding more and more of our attention, time, and energies. According to *Kids & Media @ The New Millennium*, a 1999 study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, our children are "immersed in media."[12] The typical child in the United States spends almost five and a half hours each day consuming media outside of school. For children eight years of age and older, the amount is nearly six and three-quarter hours a day. Children two to seven years old spend an average of three and a half hours a day engrossed in media of various types.[13] In releasing the study, Drew Altman, Ph.D., president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, noted that "watching TV, playing video games, listening to music, and surfing the Internet have become a full-time job for the typical American child.... This study really underscores the importance of paying attention to the messages and information kids are getting from the media, both good and bad."[14]

Advertising and marketing drive media. In the words of media ecologist George Gerbner, "a principal goal of all programming is to deliver audiences in a mood ready to buy."[15] As Jean Kilbourne, the author of *Can't Buy My Love*, puts it, "the media know that television and radio programs are simply fillers for the space between commercials. They

know that the programs that succeed are the ones that deliver the highest number of people to the advertisers. But not just any people..."[16] There was a time when the focal point of your attention was the 18-49 demographic. But increasingly, you are interested in children and teenagers.

Youth Markets Alert, an industry newsletter, reports that "products marketed to kids are no longer limited to traditional kid fare such as toys and candy. A growing number of companies are looking at children as potential adult customers. Companies such as banks, car manufacturers, and hotels are hoping to build relationships with children that will continue throughout adulthood."[17]

The unthinkable has become commonplace.

A 1999 ARTICLE in *Kidscreen*, a newsletter "about reaching children through entertainment," notes that: "There have never been more ways in the culture to support marketing toward kids, and there have never been more outlets to study how to speak to them. That makes the competition for kids' attention significantly greater, forcing advertisers to work harder to get inside kids' heads."[18]

The competition to get inside our children's heads has grown intense because children are where the money is — today and tomorrow. You spend more than $5 billion each year on advertising and promotions to our children.[19] Children "represent more market potential than any other demographic segment,"[20] according to James U. McNeal, a leading authority on the children's market. Children ages four to 12 spent almost $27 billion of their own money in 1998.[21] Children directly influenced over $187 billion in parental purchases and indirectly influenced at least $300 billion more.[22] According to one estimate, in 1999, U.S. teens spent about $100 billion and influenced others to spend an additional $50 billion.[23] According to the ad tracker Competitive Media Reporting, "the total ad spending on children's educational, children's and family entertainment and animation programming for 2000 was $1.138-billion, up $20 million from 1999."[24]

You are targeting ever-younger children and teens, who have huge and growing amounts of disposable income. You are increasingly undermining the parent-child relationship by targeting parents through their children, since parental purchases are strongly influenced by children's desires and by their nagging. You are also targeting children as future adults who, to the degree to which you are successful, will have developed strong and abiding brand loyalties by the time they reach adulthood.[25]

As recently as a generation ago, it would have been unthinkable for so many advertisers and marketers to spend billions of dollars each year to target our children at the earliest possible age with the expressed intention of training them to be life-long consumers and making them feel that their worth as people hinges on the products they buy. Or for businesses to invade public schools to bombard our children with advertisements throughout the school day. Or for corporations to be allowed to use school children as subjects of market research. Or for so many behavioral scientists to lend their expertise to advertisers for the purpose of helping them to manipulate our children. Or for so many advertisers and advertising agencies to use and sponsor sex and violence so blatantly to sell their products.

But the unthinkable has become commonplace.

You seem to have stopped caring about what you do and what you say in front of our children.

In pursuit of the market for children and youth, you are going after age groups that until recently have been considered off limits, thus occupying more and more of our children's psychic and physical space.

Invading Psychic Space: Targeting Children from Birth

> *"All of these people understand something that is very basic and logical, that if you own this child at an early age, you can own this child for years to come.... Companies are saying, 'Hey, I want to own the kid younger and younger and younger.'"* Mike Searles, former president of Toys 'R' Us[26]

> *"Traditionally, it's been a parent target, but we're going to see that change in a big way.... We've been seeing it in programming [Barney, Teletubbies]; it's just a matter of time before we see it in advertising as well."* Paul Kurnit, President, Griffin Bacal, on targeting the zero to three demographic directly[27]

> *"When it comes to targeting kid consumers, we at General Mills follow the Proctor and Gamble model of 'cradle to grave'.... We believe in getting them early and having them for life."* Wayne Chilicki, General Mills[28]

The name of the conference was "Play-Time, Snack-Time, Tot-Time: Targeting Pre-Schoolers and Their Parents," and it made the point quite clearly. When it comes to marketing to children, you recognize no limits in the competition for "share of mind." Sponsored by the International Research Institute in cooperation with the Parenting Group, the conference was held on March 13-14, 2000, in New York City, and attended by leading advertising, marketing, and programming executives. The meeting's stated goal was to "create brand loyalty at an early age that will be remembered for generations."[29]

A presentation by Paul Kurnit, President of Griffin Bacal, a leading ad agency specializing in the children's market, explored in detail the phenomenon of "KGOY (Kids Getting Older Younger)" and the subject of "New Media for the 0-3" age group. Conference participants listened to "research findings and case studies from people involved in brands such as 'Thomas the Tank Engine,' 'Teletubbies,' 'Carter's,' 'Sesame Street,' 'Elmo's World,' and 'Weeboks,'" and heard a presentation on insights "into the motivations behind today's mom's behavior and how you, as marketers, can capitalize on these motivations."[30]

Among the objectives of the conference were to: "review marketing practices that drive loyalty in the preschool market" and "analyze different research and focus group methods used in determining the wants and needs of a pre-school child." One workshop provided "hands-on training" in the latest trend in effective toddler and youth research: anthropological research, and the use of "observational research techniques" to help mar-

keters "find out the desires of toddler-age consumers," because "moms, dads, and grandparents are often unaware "of what [young children] do and really need." These techniques, participants were told, allow them "to immerse [themselves] in the environment and learn the deep needs of the individuals being observed" and "to identify [children's] real needs and motivations" in order to "develop products that answer these desires."[31]

Presenters at this conference included executives from the Children's Television Workshop (now Sesame Workshop), the producers of *Sesame Street*,[32] and the itsy bitsy entertainment company, the distributors of *Teletubbies*, the first television program "designed to capture the audience of babies."[33]

The lines between advertising and programming have been blurred.

AFTER CONDUCTING RESEARCH showing that children as young as twelve months can make brand associations, you have apparently decided to go after our babies and toddlers directly. This intentional targeting of babies and toddlers has broken one of the few remaining barriers in advertising and marketing. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) "strongly opposes programming that targets children younger than age 2, which may also be designed to market products."[34] Nevertheless, we see ads targeted with ever greater accuracy at very young children who are at their most impressionable.

According to the media critic Douglas Rushkoff, "today the most intensely targeted demographic is the baby — the future consumer...The fresh neurons of young brains are valuable mental real estate to admen. By seeding their products and images early, the marketers can do more than just develop brand recognition; they can literally cultivate a demographic's sensibilities as they are formed.... This indicates a long-term coercive strategy."[35]

Young children believe what they see and hear.[36] They do not understand that commercials and other marketing strategies are designed to get them to buy things. The lines between advertising and programming have been blurred, making it possible for advertisers to use television programs to promote the sales of toys, and giving rise to a brisk business in merchandising products with logos.[37] Many best-selling toys are linked to characters in television programs and movies. Many of these toys are violent, leading many experts to conclude that segments of the entertainment industry are intentionally marketing violence to children.[38]

The very early years of a child's life are a time for developing trust and establishing a sense of security. As they enter ages two and three, our babies begin to develop a sense of independence and individuality. They learn to say "no" and exert their senses of self. From ages three to seven, our little ones become extremely curious and their imaginations run wild. This is the time when children develop attachments to special symbols of security.[39]

Young children use their play to develop ideas about the world and to grow as individuals. When their toys are linked to what they see in the media, they are more likely to use their play to imitate what they see on the screen, including the violence, than to engage in creative play and problem-solving and to use their imaginations.[40]

For us, this knowledge underscores the need to be careful to give our children just the right balance of independence and security, the right amount of love and guidance to teach them how to control their impulses, and enough play time and appropriate toys to help them develop their budding imaginations and creativity. You use the same knowledge to figure out how to get our children fixated on your products, and how to entice them to nag and whine until they get what you want them to want.

In the words of *Kidscreen*: "Progressive agencies meet with kids on a regular basis to find out the relevant brand insight for new products and concepts. Beyond traditional focus groups, methods employed include 'friendship pairs,' in which kids talk to each other about products...; playlabs, to observe kids' play patterns with products; and .... CAPS (Child and Parents Studies)..., which evaluate the 'nag factor' (the influence kids have in purchasing a product) by determining if the information communicated to a child enables them to convince the parent to make a purchase."[41]

THROUGH THE USE of increasingly sophisticated behavioral science studies and techniques set forth in expensive and well-researched industry papers such as "The Nag Factor," and "The Art of Fine Whining,"[42] you encourage our children to complain and cry until finally many of us break down and buy. Paco Underhill, an expert in the "science" of shopping, notes that "a child's creative impulse is expressed in his or her search for the essential toy-ness in everything. ... if you want children to touch something, you must only put it low enough, and they will find it. ... Supermarkets have been at the forefront of exploiting the hands-on shopping style of children. We have countless videotape moments showing kids in grocery stores — begging, coaxing, whining, imploring Mom or Dad to choose some item (and when that fails simply grabbing it and tossing it into the cart)."[43]

And when mothers and fathers try to take control, your experts find a way to wrest it from us again. According to Underhill, "supermarkets have gotten so good at appealing to children that parents are in semi-revolt... We found an alarming trend in a study a few years back: a growing number of parents who assiduously steer clear of the cookie and cracker aisle in order to spare themselves the predictable youthful hue and cry. To counter that maneuver, our cookie manufacturer client began securing strategic adjacencies — with appropriate aisle partners (cookies on one side of the aisle and baby food on the other, for example...)."[44]

In the words of sociologist Amitai Etzioni, "children begin life as highly vulnerable and dependent persons, unable to make reasonable choices on their own, and gradually grow to become ... people able to make moral judgments, competent to act on their own, and ready to be autonomous persons."[45] The younger children are, the more vulnerable they are to the harmful effects of advertising.[46]

You and your agencies know that our children are more impressionable and vulnerable to your appeals than adults are. You seem glad that they are, for you show no qualms about using these facts to exploit our children and undermine our role as parents. It troubles us that these facts, far from causing you to act with self-restraint, far from deterring you, are attracting you.

Invading Physical Space: A New School Curriculum

> *"It isn't enough to advertise on television...You've got to reach kids throughout their day — in school, as they're shopping in the mall, or at the movies. You've got to become part of the fabric of their lives."* Carol Herman, Senior Vice President, Grey Advertising[47]

Our schools are beginning to resemble commercial bazaars.

Your advertising appeals are no longer limited to the more than 20,000 or so television commercials seen each year by the average American child.[48] There are now ads almost everywhere we and our children turn. There are ads in airports, doctors' offices, movie theaters, hospitals, ATM machines, and garbage cans, on roof tops, in elevators and the Internet, and on mobile billboards, fruit, rockets, restroom walls, beach sand, and more. In the words of one advertising executive, "I don't know if anything is sacred anymore."[49]

In a report released last September, the General Accounting Office, an agency of the United States Congress, found that "In-school marketing has become a growing industry. Some marketing professionals are increasingly targeting children in school, companies are becoming known for their successes in negotiating contracts between school districts and beverage companies, and both educators, and corporate managers are attending conferences to learn how to increase revenue from in-school marketing for their schools and companies." The report found that "only 19 states currently have statutes or regulations that address school-related commercial activities, but in 14 of these states, statutes and regulations are not comprehensive..."[50]

According to Lifetime Learning Systems, a broker of school-business partnerships, "School is ... the ideal time to influence attitudes, build long-term loyalties, introduce new products, test-market, promote sampling and trial usage, and — above all — to generate immediate sales."[51]

From school buses covered with ads, to book covers and day planners with commercial messages, to textbooks and other curricular materials sporting corporate logos, to multi-million dollar deals with soda companies, a growing number of U.S. schools are beginning to resemble commercial bazaars. The Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education (CACE) has identified eight categories of schoolhouse commercialism: 1) sponsorship of programs and activities; 2) exclusive agreements; 3) incentive programs; 4) appropriation of space; 5) sponsored education materials; 6) electronic marketing; 7) privatization; and 8) fund-raising.[52]

The Colorado Springs School District 11 was one of the first school districts in the nation directly to offer wholesale advertising opportunities to corporations. For $1,500 to $12,000, "corporate partners" can buy ads on buses and commercial announcements during school athletic games. District 11 also has an exclusive contract with Coca-Cola pursuant to which "the district will receive $8.4 million over ten years — and more if it exceeds its requirement of selling 70,000 cases of Coke products a year."[53]

Not long ago, a District official wrote to school administrators urging them to make the Coke machines "accessible to students all day."[54] In spite of the growing concerns about childhood obesity and the health effects of sugar and caffeine on children, when asked about whether the company had a quota policy on sales in schools, a Coca-Cola spokesperson responded: "If they want to make more money by selling more product, we'll work with them."[55]

Colorado District 11 is at the forefront of a growing national trend: "school-business partnerships" through which corporations offer under-funded schools needed resources in exchange for direct access to students — to sell products, to advertise, and to use children as subjects of market research.

Through Channel One, a growing number of school children have become captives of an increasingly commercial curriculum. Primedia's Channel One is a commercial satellite network that provides television sets to schools across the country in return for the right to deliver ten minutes of news and two minutes of ads each day to about eight million middle, junior, and high school children. According to Joel Babbit, a former president of Channel One, the network is a way of "forcing kids to watch two minutes of commercials. ... [T]he advertiser gets a group of kids who cannot go to the bathroom, who cannot change the station, who cannot listen to their mother yell in the background, who cannot be playing Nintendo, who cannot have their headsets on."[56] Channel One is beamed into about 12,000 schools every day and one ad for the service proudly boasted to advertisers that it is "viewed by more teens than any other television program."[57]

Children in Channel One schools spend the equivalent of a full instructional week each school year watching Channel One. According to the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education, "Channel One's daily broadcasts are twelve minutes long. However, only 20 percent of airtime is devoted to coverage of 'recent political, economic, social, and cultural stories.' The remaining 80 percent is spent on advertising; sports, weather and natural disasters, features, and Channel One promotions."[58] Spending precious school hours watching ads is bad enough. What's worse, our children, who are required by law to attend school,[59] are being forced to watch ads for products that, in many cases, we find objectionable: snack foods, sodas, candy and other products high in calories, sugar, and fat, as well as video games, and movies, many of them violent. The end result is that you are increasingly taking over school time to promote unhealthy products and unhealthy habits and lifestyles. According to a recent article in AAP News, the news magazine of the American Academy of Pediatrics, "the programs also include an advertisement for beauty "aids" that reduce self-esteem in developing young women and advertisements displaying lifestyles that promote disrespect, irresponsibility and inappropriate behaviors to young people."[60]

Advertising in schools has become such a problem that a diverse coalition of organizations, led by Commercial Alert, an advocacy group which opposes the exploitation of children, and including the Eagle Forum, Consumers Union, American Family Association, Center for a New American Dream, Focus on the Family, Coral Ridge Ministries, along with many respected scholars, wrote to the Senate and House appropriations committees asking them to stop all federal funding to Primedia's Channel One.[61] In the state of Maryland, leg-

islation was recently introduced to "require local school boards to develop policies to keep students from being the targets of advertising in school, ban exclusive agreements with soft drink companies and others who sell in vending machines, and prohibit advertising on buses."[62] The coalition against commercialism in schools is large, broad-based and growing. According to a recent issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, "Progressive consumer advocate Ralph Nader and conservative Phyllis Schlafly both have taken positions and made statements against commercialism in the classroom. The American Association of School Administrators, the National Parents Teachers Association, The Southern Baptist Convention, The National Association of State Boards of Education, and others have statements against commercialism in the schools."[63]

Marketing in our children's schools interferes with their education by taking their time and attention away from their studies. It degrades their education by substituting the values of commerce for the values of learning. It lends the schools' stamp of approval to the idea — *your* idea — that selling is always good and that buying should be a non-stop activity. It sends the message that instant gratification is good. It compromises and ultimately supplants the moral authority of educators by constantly suggesting to students that everything in life, even their education, is ultimately about spinning and pitching and soliciting.

Using Manipulative Tactics

> *"...We are in the business of manipulating people, and the question is are we going to manipulate them in a good way or a bad way."* Barry Ornstein, senior researcher, Hill Holiday Connors Cosmopoulos[66]

> *"[The] program has been designed to explore the hopes, wishes, and dreams of children and to apply those discoveries to the growth of your business.... Large group ideation sessions are routinely held with one class in their own classroom. Small group sessions can use sports teams, day camps or Scout groups. In-home groups of family and friends can also be an option for learning about the world of children....Our staff has expertise and experience in both child development and psychology."* Promotional Materials, Innovation Focus[64]

> *"Advertising at its best is making people feel that without their product, you're a loser. Kids are very sensitive to that. If you tell them to buy something, they are resistant. But if you tell them they'll be a dork if they don't, you've got their attention. You open up emotional vulnerabilities and it's very easy to do with kids because they're emotionally vulnerable."* Nancy Shalek, former president, Shalek Advertising Agency[65]

> *"Once agencies identify the aspect of a product that taps into a child's deeper motivation, they can structure messages that connect with kids on psychological and emotional levels."* Anne Adriance, strategic planning director, Saatchi & Saatchi Kid Connection[67]

With so much money to be made from our children, you are constantly trying to find new ways to reach them. Your probing into our children's minds, feelings, and sensibilities is becoming more invasive, and your strategies are increasingly coercive. According to the *Washington Post*, "with the number of children in America larger than at the peak of the baby boom, and their purchasing power growing faster than economists can measure it, a vast service industry of market researchers, public relations firms, newsletters, and ad agencies has sprung up to lead corporate America to young hearts, minds, and piggy banks."[68] Among the keys to your successfully getting to our children is to "keep a finger on the pulse of youth culture and trends."[69]

Keeping that finger on the pulse of children's culture has become a big business in and of itself. Innovation Focus, Inc., a Lancaster, Pennsylvania-based company, is among the companies probing young people's minds. The most requested type of session apparently takes place in a school, according to Margaret Owens, a program manager at Innovation Focus, because "children are most comfortable on their own turf with their peers. That level of comfort, especially for children is important in getting honest, open communication."[70]

As Owens describes it, her work of observing and questioning students about their "hopes, wishes and dreams" takes place anywhere that suits the "client's needs." "She has run the program all over the country in schools, day care centers, and even 'mommy and me' classes."[71]

Our children are increasingly under scrutiny by your market researchers — in school,[72] after school, at sports activities, during their community activities, at camp, with friends. "What this system does," according to the media critic Mark Crispin Miller, "is it closely studies the young, keeps them under very tight surveillance to figure out what will push their buttons. Then it takes that and blares it back at them relentlessly and everywhere, because these are interests with a tremendous amount of power and technological sophistication..."[73]

Your advertising and marketing agencies are increasingly using the tools of anthropology to study our children's behavior, and the insights of other behavioral sciences to manipulate our children's feelings. In the words of Johann Wachs, formerly a "kid expert" at Saatchi & Saatchi Kid Connection, your agencies are working "to be intimately familiar with the ever-changing trends and fads of kid culture; to uncover their underlying psychological and emotional meaning; and to then apply these insights into developing marketing communications."[74]

Take, for example, the Geppetto Group, an ad agency that "targets kids." It "worked with four or five practicing child psychologists to identify how kids characterize the relationships in their lives, and to mirror the best of those relational feelings in building product relationship messages. ...Within those differing relationships are the keys to effective brand imaging, because you can use them to imbue your products with kid-familiar personality characteristics. The research identified six character types which marketers can take to the bank by creating strong and appealing brand imaging."[75]

Many advertising agencies work hard to stir up children's anti-social urges. According to Chris McKee, chief creative officer of the Geppetto group, "Taboos: flatulence, or say-

ing bad words, making fun of adults or people's physical imperfections, are good for a laugh because they are representative of all the things that kids are forbidden to do."[76] Gene Del Vecchio, author of *Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide To a Kid's Heart*, observes that "cool can also be forbidden. As kids get to the tween and teen ages and the desire for independence and rebellion raises its head, cool can become those things that are too edgy, too rebellious by many parents' standards."[77]

A recent PBS FRONTLINE special report on marketing to teens dramatically illustrated the extent to which our children are under your gaze and the extent to which research and analysis done on our children shapes ads and programs which in turn help to shape our children. MTV, "long considered the arbiter of teen cool," embarked in the late 1990s on a "major teen research campaign, the hallmark of which was its 'ethnographic study' — visiting teen's homes to view first hand their lives, interests and ask some quite personal questions." This ethnographic work, which is continuing, is used by MTV to create characters and shows that "hook the teen consumer."[78]

You ask us to believe that your ads have little if any effect on our children. We are not persuaded.

According to Douglas Rushkoff, the correspondent on the program, "It's one enclosed feedback loop... Kids' culture and media culture are now one and the same, and it becomes impossible to tell which came first — the anger or the marketing of anger."[79]

The line between *meeting* and *creating* consumer needs and desires is increasingly being crossed, as your battery of creative experts study, analyze, persuade, and manipulate our children.

On September 30, 1999, Commercial Alert and 60 psychologists wrote to the American Psychological Association (APA) describing "the use of psychological insight and methodology to bypass parents and influence the behavior and desires of children" as a "crisis for the profession of psychology." The letter observed that: "regrettably a large gap has arisen between APA's mission [to "work to mitigate the causes of human suffering" and to "help the public in developing informed judgments"] and "the drift of the profession into helping corporations influence children for the purpose of selling products to them ... [T]oday these practices are reaching epidemic levels, and with a complicity on the part of the psychological profession that exceeds that of the past. The result is an enormous advertising and marketing onslaught that comprises, arguably, the largest single psychological project ever undertaken."

The authors urge the APA formally to denounce "the use of psychological techniques to assist corporate marketing and advertising to children...amend the APA's Ethics Code to establish limits for psychologists regarding the use of psychological knowledge or techniques to observe, study, manipulate, harm, exploit, mislead, trick, or deceive children for commercial purposes, and launch an ongoing campaign to probe, review and confront the use of psychological research in advertising and marketing to children."[80]

The APA has appointed a task force to consider the matter. In our opinion, you too should seriously reconsider your use of the potent tools of the behavioral sciences to manipulate our children.

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The Harm to Our Children

YOU FREQUENTLY ASK us to believe that your ads have little if any effect on our children. We are not persuaded. Much of your advertising and marketing has a profound negative effect on nearly every aspect of our children's lives. There is mounting evidence that advertising and marketing are adversely affecting our children's physical, cognitive, and social health, their values and emotional well-being, and "the very nature of childhood itself."[81]

Our Children's Health and Well-Being

Studies show a significant link between increased television use, with its insistent stream of commercials, and obesity, "the most prevalent nutritional disease among children in the United States."[82] Ads promoting the consumption of fast foods, snack foods, processed foods and other foods high in fat, sugar, and calories, and low in nutritional content are a common feature of commercial media. Commercials aired during children's programs often promote foods which in excessive quantities "may contribute to the energy imbalance that promotes obesity."[83]

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of vending machines in our children's schools. A recent *Washington Post* article notes that "one school in Prince George's County [MD] guaranteed sales of 4,500 cases of soda a year — or about 50 sodas a student. Some contracts state that schools could lose money if they turn off the machines at lunchtime, as required by state and federal law. Blair's [a Montgomery County high school] machines were humming during a recent lunch hour, a common occurrence at schools across the region." The article concluded with the story of a senior at the school. "Pressed for time to study for a calculus exam, she stopped by the machines one recent day for a Pepsi and a bag of chips — skipping the lunch her mother packed: yogurt, cookies, and an apple. 'It's fast and it's filling,' she said with a smile. Although she sometimes worries that such a meal could make her fat, she shrugged: 'Part of you thinks about going more healthy, but most kids just go more for what tastes good.'"[84]

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released a report on school lunch programs concluding that "when children are taught in the classroom about good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices but are surrounded by vending machines, snack bars, school stores and a la carte sales offering low nutrient density options, they receive the message that good nutrition is merely an academic exercise."[85]

Primedia's Channel One often broadcasts ads for candy, snack foods, and soda. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, ads for these products "almost never give information about the foods children should eat to keep healthy."[86] According to a recent article in *AAP News*, "These commercials encourage materialism and market products that in many cases can contribute to eating disorders, obesity, poor nutrition, inappropriate behaviors and poor self-esteem..."[87]

Spurred by news accounts that 13-15 million free Philip Morris book covers had been sent to school children, a coalition of groups, led by Commercial Alert, and including the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, and the Latino Council on

Alcohol and Tobacco, wrote to the National Association of Attorneys General asking that it investigate whether Philip Morris is marketing tobacco products to school children directly or indirectly in violation of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between certain tobacco companies and state officials. The January 3, 2001, letter noted that "Some educators are rightly worried about whether these Philip Morris book covers will encourage children to use tobacco products. For example, on November 27th, Delaine Eastin, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, encouraged California county and district superintendents to 'thwart this attempt by the Philip Morris Tobacco Company to reach kids with their message.'"[88]

Exposure to sexualized and violent advertisements and programming is adversely affecting our children.

In a 1999 letter asking that the Congress empower the FTC to protect children from harmful advertising, a broad-based coalition noted that "Advertisers flood children with ads for violent entertainment, including violent video games, movies, and television...The FTC recently reported to Congress that the alcohol industry often advertises to audiences with large numbers of children...Children are inundated with ads for Whoppers, Happy Meals, Coke, Pepsi, Snickers bar, M&M's, and other junk foods and fast foods. These ads may contribute to skyrocketing levels of childhood obesity...Similarly, childhood diabetes is also on the rise. It is a cause for shame that advertisers in this country would devote their talents and energies to prod unsuspecting children in these directions."[89]

Our Children's Values and Emotions

There is substantial evidence that, given its cumulative impact, your marketing is emotionally harmful to our children and destructive to their values. In the words of Debbie Weber, president of Multi-Media Promotions, Inc., and a professor of marketing, today's children are steeped in a "got-to-have-it or gimme attitude."[90]

Gary Ruskin, who directs Commercial Alert, writes: "Advertising is a type of curriculum — the most persuasive in America today. It is one curriculum kids are excelling in. The ads teach kids that buying is good and will make them happy. They teach that the solution to life's problems lies not in good values, hard work, or education, but in materialism and the purchasing of more and more things."[91] Research shows that people "highly focused on materialistic values... report less satisfaction with life, less happiness, worse interpersonal relationships, more drug and alcohol abuse and less contribution to community."[92]

According to professors of psychology Allen Kanner and Tim Kasser, signatories to the September 30, 1999, Commercial Alert letter to the American Psychological Association, ads that make children feel inadequate unless they buy an endless array of goods and services contribute "to the formation of a shallow 'consumer identity' that is obsessed with instant gratification and material wealth....From our clinical work we know that when adults chronically deceive and manipulate... child[ren], it erodes the youngsters' ability to trust others and feel secure in the world. We would expect the falsehoods and distortions in commercials to have a similar effect."[93]

The evidence is increasingly clear: the commercial indoctrination to which you are subjecting our children does not make for happy or fulfilled people. According to the psychologist David Myers, "the conclusion is startling because it challenges modern materialism. So far as happiness goes, it is not 'the economy, stupid.'"[94]

The media critic Robert McChesney concludes that "it really promotes the sort of world in which you don't think anything matters, unless it serves your material gain. Why be honest? Why have integrity? Why care about other people? That's for chumps. It's all about taking care of number one....Why should I care about that other person, you know? What's in it for me?...And that's not a healthy environment for society."[95] Alexis de Tocqueville long ago called it democracy's most dangerous temptation — self-centeredness or egotism, in which "citizens have no sympathy for any but themselves."[96]

In addition, the programs that your advertising sponsors have in recent years grown increasingly sexual and violent.[97] The National Institutes of Health declared in 1982 that television is an "important sex educator" that helps to shape our children's beliefs and behaviors about sex.[98] In the ensuing years, it has become even more so, and not for the better.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics: "Billions of dollars are being spent to encourage children and adolescents to buy products that are not healthy for them, with American advertising messages often including inappropriate sexual innuendos in an attempt to sell their products."[99] A 1999 Media Education Policy Statement issued by the Academy of Pediatrics concluded that the average child "is exposed to more than 14,000 sexual references each year, yet only a handful provides an accurate portrayal of responsible sexual behavior...."[100] In its 2001 study of sexual messages on television called Sex On TV, the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 68 percent of all shows on TV in the 1999-2000 season included sexual content, up from 56 percent during the 97-98 television season. Noting that TV's sexual messages "shape [young people's] ideas of what other people their age are doing, saying and thinking," the study reported that the shows with sexual content averaged more than four scenes with sexual content per hour.[101]

On July 26, 2000, four major health organizations, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, issued an unprecedented joint statement declaring that "the conclusion of the public health community, based on over 30 years of research, is that viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values, and behavior, particularly in children. Its effects are measurable and long-lasting. Moreover, prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence in real life."[102] The American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded that "although media violence is not the only cause of violence in American society, it is the single most easily remediable contributing factor."[103]

Public health authorities agree that exposure to the sexualized and violent programming many of you sponsor is adversely affecting the values and behavior of children. A 1999 study published in *Pediatrics*, concluded that "American media contribute more to adverse health outcomes than to positive or prosocial ones."[104]

It is painfully clear to us that our children are being shaped by a powerful, coercive, and negative value system in which, according to the author Mary Pipher, "bad choices are constantly being reinforced."[105] The most pervasive effect, according to the psychologist David Walsh, is the promotion of a "culture of disrespect": "The media have redefined how we are supposed to treat one another. We've gone from 'have a nice day' to 'make my day.' And too many of our kids have learned the lesson."[106]

You may not "brand" our children.

Why We Raise Our Voices as Mothers

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT ADVERTISERS ARE, in a fundamental sense, bidding to be substitute mothers for our children. Consider the words of James U. McNeal. Children are "born to be consumers." They "begin their consumership early in life." "The consumer embryo begins to develop in the first year of existence." Children are "consumer cadets." Advertisers seek to maintain "a permanent relationship with children." They seek to "nurture kids as future consumers." Their "long-term strategy" is "growing consumers from childhood." They seek to induce our children to "bond with" and "start relationships with" their brands.[107]

This is, unmistakably, the language of marketing imitating the language of mothering. We know that you reluctantly recognize us to be gatekeepers with respect to our children.[108] In your planning and strategizing about how to get to our children, you consistently look for ways to neutralize our impact as gatekeepers. But we want to tell you clearly that we will not be neutralized.

There is an intense and growing competition between marketers and mothers. At stake are bedrock issues: Who will raise our children? Who will tell them the stories that shape their human character? Who will impart the values that give them a sense of purpose? Will it be the money world or the motherworld? You or us?

We are determined that the money world will not raise our children. You may not "grow" our children. You may not "bond" with them. You may not "brand" our children.

We are, as the feminist scholar Sara Ruddick describes us, "custodians of the promise of birth."[109] We are persuaded, as the cultural critic Neil Postman has suggested, that mothers have a critical role to play in "overseeing" and saving childhood.[110]

We are at a critical turn, with the very idea of childhood under attack, and with it the idea of motherhood. As a society, we must decide whether to continue to view childhood as a time of relative innocence. More and more, the culture seems to teach that a good life is a materially successful life, and that a primary goal of living is to garner material possessions. According to this contemporary view of childhood, childhood is to be gotten on with as quickly as possible. In this view, what our children need most is help in promoting their cognitive development, and their ability to succeed at school and at work in order to get the material possessions they want.

We reject this shallow, harmful, dehumanizing way of looking at childhood. It focuses almost exclusively on the material success of children and neglects the development of

character. In such a climate, it is easy to see why barriers once regarded as sacrosanct are being freely broken. But they are being broken at inestimable cost. We are mindful, as the anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy has observed, that "to be distinctively human ... is to develop this unique empathetic component that is the foundation of all morality."[111] Without a time for a childhood that nourishes our children's spiritual and ethical capacities, it is very difficult to raise children with sympathy for those other than themselves.

We know that in order to protect our children from the threats of the money world, *we* must change.

Among the key findings of the *Kids and Media* report is that "more and more children spend more and more time with media messages absent adult supervision, adult oversight, adult presence, or an adult game plan."[112] Children in our culture are increasingly alone and left to fend for themselves. You know that there is a vacuum in the lives of many of our children, and you have stepped in to fill it.

One reason that children have become such a powerful consumer force is that mothers and fathers have allowed it to happen. You target our children in part because we have let you. We are chastened by the realization, as James U. McNeal has put it, that "You have to go back to mom a little bit: by the time a little kid can follow the drool down his chest he sees the Osh Kosh Begosh (logo.) Mom has introduced him to brands by age one."[113]

Johann Wachs, an advertising expert, describes the challenge this way: "With baby boomers and (increasingly) Gen-Xers now parents, the cultural framework of childhood has been drastically changed. More liberal generations apply new values to parenting, authority, gender, family life, media consumption and leisure pursuits. Those generations' most important childhood legacies are ... greater permissiveness, which spurs development (and commercial exploitation) of kid culture ... Childhood sure ain't the same anymore."[114]

We acknowledge that we, too, have been shaped by the culture of consumption. We are not immune to your strategies. We too have been persuaded, as the media critic Jean Kilbourne describes it, by a culture that encourages "escapism, consumerism, violence and greed."[115]

Our Pledge

We make the following commitments to the children we nurture and to each other.

1. To Look Inward and Work to Change Ourselves.

We will take stock of our own lives, mindful that, for our children, our actions speak louder than words. We will think about the messages we are sending to our children in the ways that we deal with money and material things, by how we use our time, how we earn and spend our money, and how we shop.

We will consider the roles that media, advertising, and marketing play in our own lives. We will ask, and honestly seek to answer, some basic questions. Do we deal with

feelings of guilt by spending money on our children? Do we use money spent *on* our children as a substitute for time spent *with* them? Has our culture's "me-first-gotta-have-it-gimme" mentality affected us as well?

We will work to make the changes in our lives that will send a message to our children that we are breaking free of advertising's and marketing's hold on our own lives. We will strive to lead less media-driven, work-driven, and consumption-driven lives, and more balanced, fruitful, and purposeful lives.

2. To Reassert Ourselves and Our Values in the Lives of Our Children.

We will work with fathers and other adults to take more active roles in the lives of children. We recognize that our children need more of our time focused specifically on the work of building up their capacities to make ethical judgments, and more on helping them understand the influence of media, advertising, and marketing in their lives.

We will devote more of our time to strengthening our children's ethical foundations. We will teach our children self-discipline, empathy, moderation, charity, and other values that will help them resist the messages of advertising and marketing. We will do our best each day to model in our own lives the values we seek to teach our children.

3. To Be Informed and To Deconstruct Advertising and Marketing Messages.

We will work hard to deepen our — and our children's — understanding of the strategies and tactics used by advertisers and marketers. As the author Juliet Schor has noted "the first step toward transforming America's consumer culture is to understand it better."[116] We will avail ourselves of the growing number of local, state, national, and international resources for education and action on dealing with the excesses of advertising and marketing.[117]

4. To Make Our Homes Commerce-Free Zones.

We will take the steps necessary to make our families and homes safe havens for our children. To the degree that we are able, we will limit the amount of advertising and marketing to which our children are exposed. We will strictly limit our children's — and our own — uses of TV, cable, radio, video games, and the Internet. We will actively resist "branding"; we will stop allowing ourselves and our children to become walking billboards for advertisers. When we do watch TV, we will mute the TV during the commercials to get our families in the habit of avoiding advertisements. We will not allow our children to be subjects of market research.

We will decrease the amount of time we and our children spend watching TV, listening to radio, playing video games, and surfing the Internet, and increase the amount of time that we spend with our children engaged in activities that are not media-driven, such as playing games, reading aloud, volunteering together, engaging in sports activities, walking, and hiking. We will work to make our children media-literate — communicating regularly with them about the messages conveyed by media, advertising, and marketing, and the financial motivations driving those messages.[118]

5. To Reach Out to Our Fellow Citizens.

We and our children will join with others to establish "communities of resistance" — small groups of people focused on supporting each other in their efforts to resist the pull of advertising and marketing in our lives. We will also establish links with other local, state, national, and international groups to support each other's efforts.[119] We are heartened and encouraged by the successes of Commercial Alert; Obligation, Inc.; the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education; Junkbusters and others in getting ZapMe! and N2H2 out of our children's schools.[120]

We will work to establish more spaces in which children can be safe from the entreaties of advertising and marketing. We will work with other mothers and fathers to ensure that schools, day care centers, and other centers of community activity are marketing-free, free of violent and sexually degrading programming, and the intrusions of market researchers.

We will use the political and economic resources at our disposal in corporate boardrooms, in executive suites, in all branches of government, in the marketplace, in our communities of faith, in our neighborhoods, and in our homes, to reestablish a proper balance between the values necessary for raising our children and the values of commerce.

6. To Make Our Schools Commercial-Free Zones.

We will work to make sure that there is no advertising, marketing, or market research in our children's schools, and we will lobby school authorities to fund independent media literacy programs in our schools, not programs sponsored and supported by media and advertising organizations.[121]

7. To Support Companies that Support Us and Refuse to Support Those That Do Not.

Advertising that promotes anti-social values, urges instant gratification, promotes self-indulgence, promotes an obsession with money and material things, and sells the idea that "we are what we buy," harms our children, undermines the authority of mothers and fathers, and hurts society.

We will make it our business to find out which advertisers are supporting us and which are not.

We will ask the advertisers of children's products and services whether they: conduct market research and advertising in schools; target babies and toddlers in their advertising campaigns; or have conducted studies on the effects of their use of the behavioral sciences to market to children. We will personally review their advertising to see if they are promoting destructive values. And we will make our consumer purchasing decisions accordingly.

We will support — and urge our family, friends, and associates to support — companies that demonstrate their good faith and their willingness to watch out for children. We will support companies that show that they respect the human dignity of our children by voluntarily:

- Adopting codes of conduct committing themselves to refrain from advertising and marketing to children and adolescents;[122]
- Refraining from advertising and marketing in schools and conducting market research in schools, including high schools;
- Refusing to use the resources of the behavioral sciences to manipulate children and adolescents;
- Producing clothing, accessories, and other merchandise that are not in themselves advertising for particular brands;
- Creating toys that promote creativity and are not linked to media programs.

As to those that do not, we will do our best to demonstrate to them that it is in their business interest to change their ways. We will use our power as consumers and as stockholders, and urge others to do so as well.

8. To Work for Public Policies that Adequately Protect Our Children

We join in the spirit of the "Golden Marble" protest — the grass roots protest against the industry awards program honoring the "best" advertisements and promotional campaigns aimed at children. The "Golden Marble" protest, believed to be the first public demonstration against the over-commercialization of our children's lives, called for greater vigilance on the part of public servants to make sure that our children's well-being is protected. The protesters called, among other initiatives, for a White House conference on corporate marketing; funding of the National Institutes of Health for research into the psychosocial and health effects of excessive marketing to children; federal regulation of marketing to children; the banning of marketing of products to children known to be harmful to them; and making schools advertising-free zones. We support these initiatives and will work to see them put into effect.[123]

We will also appeal to the President of the United States and to Congress to direct the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to undertake a comprehensive rule-making on the subject of advertising and marketing to children to protect children from harmful advertising, and to appropriate adequate funding to permit the agency to carry out this task with dispatch.[124] We join in the spirit of Commercial Alert's October 12, 1999, letter to Speaker Hastert and Senate Majority Leader Lott signed by a broad-based coalition and urging Congress to repeal a 1980 law revoking the authority of the FTC "to enact rules against advertisers who take advantage of the vulnerabilities of impressionable children." We join the signatories of that letter in urging Congress "to restore the FTC's authority to enact solutions" to the excessive commercialization of our children's lives "before it gets worse."[125] We will likewise appeal to the President and Congress to direct the Federal Communications Commission to make recommendations for clarification of the standard of service expected of broadcasters to protect children.[126]

WE CALL UPON ALL MOTHERS to join in this quest to "watch out for children." Together, we will say to anyone who would exploit our children, "No, you won't. If you want to get to our children, you will have to go through us."

Our Next Steps

OUR PURPOSE IN ISSUING this statement is to help establish a more vibrant culture of childhood. As advertisers, your own self-interest is involved here as well.[17] Neither the money world nor democratic life can thrive in the absence of the virtue of sympathy for others, which is profoundly weakened by the "me first" messages of most advertising and marketing campaigns.

We understand that you face powerful competitive forces in the marketplace and that it will take great courage for you to say "enough." We promise that we will do our part to support your company if it joins in the effort to address this problem. We will trumpet your values and your courage, and we will not forget the companies that take aggressive steps to protect our children.

We seek to spark a national debate to chart a new course of peaceful coexistence between the money world and the motherworld. Remembering the days when you voluntarily subscribed to stricter codes of behavior, we have adopted, and urge you to endorse, as minimum standards, the following *Mothers' Code for Advertisers*.

Mothers' Code for Advertisers

1) No advertising, marketing, or market research in schools, including high schools.

2) No targeting of advertising and marketing at children under the age of 8.

3) No product placement in movies and media programs targeted at children and adolescents.

4) No behavioral science research to develop advertising and marketing aimed at children and adolescents.

5) No advertising and marketing directed at children and adolescents that promotes an ethic of selfishness and a focus on instant gratification.

6) Good faith efforts to reduce sponsorship of gratuitously sexual and/or violent programming likely to be watched by children.

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In the coming weeks, small groups of us will seek meetings with the heads of:

1) Advertiser and advertising agency trade associations;
2) The ten largest advertisers in the United States; and
3) Leading advertisers to children and teens, with the aim of sharing our concerns and recommending our Mothers' Code for Advertisers.

WE HOPE THAT YOU will be willing to begin a good faith dialogue focused on one question: How can we strike a better balance between your right to do business and the right of mothers and fathers to raise children free from a barrage of harmful advertising and marketing?

In the months ahead, we will seek to learn more about: the ethical principles that guide your work; what limits you recognize as you advertise and market to our children; the steps you would be prepared to take to de-escalate the assault on childhood; and the steps you would be prepared to take to help promote more positive values for our children.

We will issue a mothers' report to the nation on the results of our efforts.

Conclusion

YOU, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MONEY WORLD, are not solely responsible for the values crisis among our children. We, representatives of the motherworld, fully accept our share of responsibility. But, we can no longer allow you to avoid your share of responsibility, and we urge you to accept it. We must watch out for children and we must insist that you do the same.

Signatories

For a complete list of signatories, or to become a signatory, please visit *www.rebelmothers.org*. Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.

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Endnotes

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8. To be sure, our ideas of childhood have evolved historically. The notion that childhood should be a time of innocence is a relatively new one. See, for example, Neil Postman. 1994. *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York, NY: Vintage Books) and Kay Hymowitz. 2000. *Ready or Not: What Happens When We Treat Children As Small Adults*. (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books).

9. National Association of Broadcasters. 1981. *The Television Code* (Washington, DC: NAB Code Authority): 4. Referring to the role of advertisers in the early days of television Jim Edwards writes: "As for taste, the networks all still followed guidelines developed by advertisers (from the days when they were making the shows) that kept the language tame and the sexual situations (even for married couples) almost nonexistent." See Jim Edwards. 2001. "Nice TV." *Brill's Content* (March): 146.

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12. Donald F. Roberts, Ulla G. Foehr, Victoria J. Rideout, and Mollyann Brodie. 1999. *Kids & Media @ The New Millennium: A Comprehensive National Analysis of Children's Media Use* (Menlo Park, CA: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation). (November): 78. Also available at *www.kff.org*

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14. Drew Altman as quoted in The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. November 17, 1999. "New Study Finds Kids Spend Equivalent of Full Work Week Using Media." Press Release regarding *Kids & Media @ The New Millennium: A Comprehensive National Analysis of Children's Media Use* by Donald F. Roberts, Ulla G. Foehr, Victoria J. Rideout, and Mollyann Brodie. 1999. Menlo Park, CA: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (November 17). See also *www.kff.org*

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24. Catherine Schetting. 2001. "Tykes, Tweens, and Teens." *Broadcasting & Cable* (March 5). Available at: *www.twinsite.com/broadcastingcable*.

25. James U. McNeal. 1999. *The Kids Market: Myths and Realities*. (Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market Publishing): 29-30.

26. Mike Searles as quoted in Ron Harris. 1989. "Children Who Dress for Success." *Los Angeles Times* (November 12): A1.

27. Paul Kurnit as quoted in Ed Kirchdoeffer. 1999. "Keeping Up With Today's Kids." *Kidscreen On Line* (January). Available at: *www.kidscreen.com/articles/ks24101.asp*

28. Wayne Chilicki as quoted in Gary Ruskin. 1999. "Why They Whine: How Corporations Prey on Children." *Mothering Magazine* no. 97 (Nov/Dec). Available at: *www.commercialalert.org*

29. Institute for International Research. 2000. "Play-Time, Snack-Time, Tot-Time: Targeting Pre-Schoolers and Their Parents." Conference Brochure. (Institute for International Research: New York, NY). See: *www.consumerkids.net*

30. *Ibid*.

31. *Ibid*.

32. Staff of the Children's Television Workshop appeared at this conference notwithstanding the entreaties of consumer advocate Ralph Nader and Gary Ruskin of Commercial Alert, an advocacy group which opposes the exploitation of children. In a February 14, 2000 letter, Mr. Nader and Mr. Ruskin wrote, "It would be a betrayal of your audience of thousands of vulnerable and unsuspecting children, for CTW to participate in this conference, and we ask you not to do so. This conference is a form of commercial child molestation. Its purpose is to teach corporate marketers how to 'create brand recognition and consumer loyalty' in children as young as two years of age. It seeks to manipulate innocent and impressionable toddlers for commercial gain... If the Children's Television Workshop actually believes its own 'commitment to the betterment of children,' it cannot possibly assist corporate advertisers in their efforts to get children to nag their parents, sow intra-family strife, or sell junk food to American children who already suffer skyrocketing levels of childhood obesity, etc." See Commercial Alert. 2000. "Nader Asks PBS, CTW to Withdraw from 'Commercial Child Molestation' Conference." Press Release (February 14): available at *http://lists.essential.org/pipermail/commercial-alert/2000/000005.html*

33. Susan Linn and Alvin Poussaint. 1999. "Spare The Babies from Teletubbies and Toy Tie-In Marketing." *The Los Angeles Times* (January 18): B5. Note also, in 1999 the isty bitsy Entertainment Company licensed the Burger King Company to promote *Teletubbies*. According to a coalition letter, spearheaded by Commercial Alert and joined by (among others) Alvin Poussaint, MD, Director, Media Center of the Judge Barker Children's Center and William Beardslee, MD, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, "That is good news for Burger King. It is not good news for the toddlers who are manipulated into eating unhealthy food...Many parents trust PBS to provide high-quality educational programming. But Teletubbies was created for our youngest children, for whom watching TV provides no known benefits and may cause harm. PBS is abusing parents' trust by encouraging children under two to become viewers. This is a bonanza for TV advertisers...It is troubling in the extreme that PBS would assist advertisers in this exploitation." See Commercial Alert. 2000. Letter to Pat Mitchell, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Broadcasting Service (March 22). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/teletubbies/teletubbieslet.html*

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36. This is true with older children as well, but younger children are especially vulnerable. "There have been numerous studies documenting that young children under 8 years of age developmentally are unable to under-

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stand the intent of advertisements and, in fact, accept advertising claims as true." See American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Children Adolescents, and Advertising." Policy Statement RE9504. *Pediatrics* (February): 295-297 and J. Cantor. 1998. *Mommy, I'm Scared': How TV Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them.* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company): Chapters 2 and 3.

37. See Susan Linn, 2000. "Electronic Marketing: Here Kiddie, Kiddie." *The Boston Sunday Globe* (January 16).

38. See Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levin. 1999. "The War-Toy Connection." *The Christian Science Monitor* (October 5): 9, arguing that "Both the quantity and quality of violence marketed to young children have continued escalating since children's TV was deregulated in 1984 and it became legal to market toys to children through media. First, it was done through TV shows like 'GI Joe,' 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,' and 'Power Rangers.' Now, movies are often the preferred vehicle for marketing violent toys and products to children. Many of the movies are rated PG-13 or even R, but their toys are marketed to children ages 4 and up... Often toys linked to these movies are also linked to other media such as TV, video games, and comic books. This cross-feeding starts with toys for the youngest children and begins the cycle of children's involvement with entertainment violence." See also Federal Trade Commission. 2000. *Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children: A Review of Self-Regulation and Industry Practices in the Motion Picture, Music Recording & Electronic Game Industries. A Report to the Federal Trade Commission* (September). Available at *www.ftc.gov*. According to FTC Chairman, Robert Pitofsky, "Companies in the entertainment industry routinely undercut their own rating restrictions by target marketing violent films, records, and video games to young audiences. These industries can and should do better than this report illustrates.'" Federal Trade Commission. 2000. "FTC Releases Report on the Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children." FTC Press Release (September 11): 2. Available at *www.ftc.gov*.

In an encouraging development, it appears that some entertainment companies have been taking steps to address this problem. See Scott Collins and Kim Masters. 2001. "Special Report: MTV's Young Audience, Once a Boon, Now Threatens the Network's Bottom Line." *Inside ;Magazine* (March 26). Available at *www.inside.com*, noting that "Last year, under pressure from lawmakers who accused them of selling violent fare to youngsters, Warner Bros., Fox, Disney, and MGM agreed to adhere to the 35-percent rule in promoting R-rated films." The 35 percent rule "declared R-rated ads taboo when more than 35 percent of a show's viewers are under 17."

39. David Walsh. 1990. *Designer Kids: Consumerism and Competition: When is it all too much?* (Deaconess Press: Minneapolis, MN). For a discussion of the developmental stages of childhood, see especially Chapter 2.

40. See Susan Linn and Diane E. Levin. 2000. "Shielding Children." *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 22): 11.

41. Ed Kirchdoeffer. 1999. "Keeping Up with Today's Kids." *Kidscreen On Line* (January). Available at: *www.kidscreen.com/articles/ks24101.asp*.

42. Quoted in Gary Ruskin. 1999. "Why They Whine: How Corporations Prey on Children." *Mothering Magazine* no. 97 (Nov/Dec). Available at: *www.commercialalert.org*.

43. Paco Underhill. 1999. *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping.* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster): 143-144.

44. *Ibid.* 144.

45. Amitai Etzioni. 2001. *The Monochrome Society.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press): 108.

46. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising." Policy Statement RE9504. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 2 (February): 295-297. See also: Amitai Etzioni. 2001. *The Monochrome Society.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press): 108, quoting Stanford Law Professor Michael Wald: "Younger children, generally those under 10-12 years old, do lack the cognitive abilities and judgmental skills necessary to make decisions about major events which could severely affect their lives... Younger children are not able to think abstractly, have a limited future time sense, and are limited in their ability to generalize and predict from experience."

47. Carol Herman as quoted in Consumers Union. c1995. *Selling America's Kids: Commercial Pressures on Kids of the '90's.* (Consumers Union: Yonkers, NY): 1. Available at *www.consumersunion.org/other/sellingkids*.

48. American Academy of Pediatrics. 2001. *Television and the Family.* (Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics). Available at *www.medem.org*.

49. Commercial Alert. 2000. "Ad Creep." Available at *www.commercialalert.org/adcreep/index.html*. See also Mike Swanson as quoted in Skip Wollenberg. 1999. "Awash in Advertising: From the Beach to the Bathroom, Product Pitches are Everywhere." *The Austin American Statesman* (June 1): C1.

50. General Accounting Office. 2000. "GAO Report Shows Most Kids Not Protected from Ads in Schools." News Release regarding *Commercial Activities in Schools.* GAO Report No. GAO/HEHS-00-156. See *www.gao.gov*.

51. Quoted in John Sheehan. 1999. "Why I Said No to Coca-Cola." *Rethinking Schools* vol. 14 no. 2 (Winter). Available at *www.rethinkingschools.org*

52. A. Molnar and J. Morales. 2000. *Commercialism@School: The Third Annual Report on Trends in Schoolhouse Commercialism* (CACE-00-02). (Milwaukee, WI: Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education).

53. Quoted in Steven Manning. 1999. "Students for Sale: How Corporations Are Buying Their Way Into America's Classrooms." *The Nation* vol. 269, no. 9 (September 27).

54. Quoted in *Ibid.*

55. Quoted in *Ibid.* In an encouraging development, on March 14, 2001, the Coca-Cola Co., announced that it would "discourage its bottlers from making exclusive arrangements with schools to promote the sale of soda." See Marc Kaufmann. 2001. "Coca Cola Tries To Cap Exclusive School Deals." *The Washington Post* (March 14): A02.

56. Quoted in Gary Ruskin. 1999. "Why They Whine: How Corporations Prey on Children." *Mothering Magazine* no. 97 (Nov/Dec). Available at: *www.commercialalert.org*

57. Primedia's Channel One sales literature. Available at *www.obligation.org/salesliterature2.html*

58. Center for Commercial-Free Public Education. "Facts About Channel One." Available at *www.commercialfree.org/channelone.html*. See also, Max B. Sawicky and Alex Molnar. 1998. *The Hidden Costs of Channel One: Estimates for the Fifty States*. (Wisconsin, MI: Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education) (April 1). Available at: *www.schoolcommercialism.org*

59. Note that Obligation, Inc. and Commercial Alert recently sent a letter to Governor Bob Taft asking him not to allow Ohio's local schools to use the State's compulsory education laws to force children to watch commercials in schools. The letter noted that "According to the *Toledo Blade* two Ohio children... spent October 6th [2000] in the Wood County Juvenile Detention Center because they refused to watch Channel One and other televised programming at Perrysburg Junior High School." See Commercial Alert. 2000. "Governor Taft Urged Not to Punish Children Who Decline to Watch Channel One or TV in School." Press Release (October 18). Available at *http://lists.essential.org/pipermail/commercial-alert/2000/000040.html*

60. Linda Reid and Alberto Gedisman. 2000. Required TV Program in Schools Encourages Poor Lifestyle Choices. *AAP News* (November). See *www.aap.org*

61. Commercial Alert. 2000. Letter to The Honorable Ted Stevens, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate regarding "Eliminating all Federal Funding of Channel One." (March 2). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/channel_one/stevens.html*, and Commercial Alert. 2000. Letter to The Honorable C.W. Bill Young, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives regarding "Eliminating All Federal Funding of Channel One (March 2): available at *www.commercialalert.org/channel_one/young.html* Letters were also sent to "Governors, asking them to take all steps within their powers to remove Channel One from their state's public schools; Channel One's advertisers, asking them to stop advertising on Channel One; Members of the House Education Committee, asking them to hold hearings on Channel One; and, Channel One's partners, asking them to sever their partnership with Channel One." These letters are available at *www.commercialalert.org/channel_one/*

62. See Daniel LeDuc. 2001. "Legislators Urge Ban on Ads in Md. Schools, Exclusivity Pacts With Soda Companies Targeted. *The Washington Post* (February 21): B01.

63 Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP. 2001. "Commercialism in Classrooms." *Pediatrics* vol. 107 no. 4 (April): e44. Available at *www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/107/4/e44*

64. Innovation Focus. "Inventing With Kids: Kids Imagine It... You Achieve It... Growth." (Lancaster, PA: Innovation Focus, Inc.). See *www.innovationfocus.com*

65. Quoted in Ron Harris. 1989. "Children Who Dress For Success." *Los Angeles Times* (November 12): A1. The article from which this quote was taken identified Ms. Shalek as a concerned mother.

66. Miriam H. Zoll. 2000. "Psychologists Challenge Ethics of Marketing to Children." *Mediachannel.org* (April 5). Available at *www.mediachannel.org/originals/kidsell.shtml*

67. Quoted in Ed Kirchdoerffer. 1999. "Keeping Up With Today's Kids." *Kidscreen On Line*. (January). Available at: *www.kidscreen.com/articles/ks24101.asp*

68. Dale Russakoff. 1999. "For Marketers, Youth Trend is No Child's Play." *The Washington Post* (April 19): A1.

69. Youth Markets Alert. 2000. "Youth Market Growth Sparks Increase in Kid-Focused Marketing Agencies." *Youth Markets Alert* vol. 12, no. 3 (March 1).

70. MaryAnne Motter Cullen. 1999. "Inventing With Kids: No Way Is It Kid Stuff." *Intelligencer Journal* (Lancaster, PA) (May 3): 8.

71. *Ibid.*

72. The Student Privacy Protection Act, introduced in the House of Representatives in 2000 by U.S. Rep George Miller, and scheduled to be re-introduced in 2001, would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require that state and local educational agencies that receive federal funds: 1) develop policies regarding in-school commercialization activities in consultation with parents; and 2) provide notice to parents regarding such policies. For more information, contact Rep. Miller's office 202-225-2095 or write to him at *www.house.gov/georgemiller/*. The bill was also introduced in the Senate under the sponsorship of Senator Christopher J. Dodd on February 8th, 2001. It was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Status of this Bill — Bill no S.290 — bill can be checked at *http://thomas.loc.gov/*.

73. Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). 2001. "What's This Doing To The Kids?" FRONTLINE: *Merchants of Cool*. See *www.pbs.org/frontline/shows/cool*.

74. Johann Wachs. 1999. "Industry experts: A Farewell To Charms: Kid Marketing And the Challenge of Difference." *PR and Marketing Network* (May26). See *www.prandmarketing.com*.

75. PR and Marketing Network. 1999. "Market Research: Brand Imaging Linked To Kids' Relationships." *PR and Marketing Network* (April 2). See *www.prandmarketing.com*.

76. Chris McKee. 1999. "Humor: The hard-core kid creative (Part II: Silly Sells)." *Kidscreen* (February). See *www.kidscreen.com*.

77. Gene Del Vecchio. 1998. "The Way Kids Are: Chasing cool." *Kidscreen* (February). See *www.kidscreen.com*.

78. Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). "Synopsis." FRONTLINE: *Merchants of Cool*. See *www.pbs.org/frontline/shows/cool*.

79. *Ibid.*

80. See letter written to Dr. Richard Suinn, president of the American Psychological Association. September 30, 1999. Available at *www.commercialalert.org/psychology*.

81. Peggy Crowley. 2000. "To Market, To Market." *The Star Ledger* (Newark, NJ). (February 20). See also American Academy of Pediatrics. 2001. "Children, Adolescents, and Television." Policy Statement RE0043. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 2 (February): 423-426.

82. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising." Policy Statement RE 9504. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 2 (February): 295-297.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Dale Nakamura. 2001. "Schools Hooked On Junk Food." *The Washington Post* (February 27): A01.

85. Quoted in Philip Brasher (Associated Press). 2001. "USDA Eyes Rules to Cut Junk at Schools." *The Commercial Appeal* (Memphis, TN) (February 7): A6. See also a coalition letter dated July 12, 2001 to the Chairman and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, noting that "For decades, the School Lunch Program has served this nation well. It has provided tens of billions of healthful meals to the nation's schoolchildren. In recent years, however, the goals of the School Lunch Program have come under increasing attack, and the culprits are the recipients of these federal dollars — that is the public schools. thousands of those schools have openly defied the intent of the Senate and House Agricultural Committees, and Congress as a whole, in providing those dollars, by encouraging school children to eat junk food. In these schools, corporations and school administrators have joined together to market high-calorie, caffeinated, high-sugar candy and soda pop to impressionable children." See Commercial Alert. 2000. Letter to The Honorable Richard Lugar, Chairman, and The Honorable Tom Harkin, Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, U.S. Senate regarding "The Marketing of Junk Food and the National School Lunch Act." (July 12). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/junkfood/aglet.html*.

86. American Academy of Pediatrics. 2001. *Television and the Family*. (Elk Grove Village, IL). Available at *www.medem.org*.

87. Linda Reid, MD, FAAP, and Alberto Gedisman, MD, FAAP. 2000. "Required TV Program in Schools Encourages Poor Lifestyle Choices." *AAP News* (November). See *www.aap.org*. Primedia's Channel One has also featured advertising for violent entertainment. The Federal Trade Commission in September 2000, released a report on the "Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children" which concluded that "while the entertainment industry has taken steps to identify content that may not be appropriate for children, the companies in these industries still routinely target children under 17 in their marketing of products their own rating systems deem inappropriate or warrant parental caution due to violent content." Federal Trade Commission. 2000. "FTC Releases Report on the Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children." Press

Release. (Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC) September 11. Available at *www.ftc.gov/opa/2000/09/index.htm*

88. Commercial Alert. 2000. Letter to Attorney General Andrew Ketterer, President, National Association of Attorneys General regarding "Are Philip Morris Textbook Covers Luring Children to Tobacco?" (January 3). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/tobachookcoverlet.html*

89. Commercial Alert. 1999. Letter to The Honorable Dennis Hastert, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives and to The Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader, United State Senate (October 12). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/ftccoallet.html*

90. Debbie Weber. 1997. "Opinion: The Way Kids Are: A New Breed of Kids." *Kidscreen* (April). Available at *www.kidscreen.com*

91. Gary Ruskin. 1999. "Why They Whine: How Corporations Prey on Children." *Mothering Magazine* no. 97 (Nov/Dec). Available at: *www.commercialalert.org*. See also David Walsh. 1994. *Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profits Before Values and What Parents Can Do* (Minneapolis: Fairview Press), arguing that television values violence, sex, wealth, rewards without working, drugs and alcohol, selfishness, and disrespect.

92. Allen Kanner and Tim Kasser. 2000. "Stuffing Our Kids: Should Psychologists Help Advertisers Manipulate Children?" Available online at *www.commercialalert.org/psychology/stuffingourkids.html*. An earlier version of this paper appeared in the February 2000 issue of *The California Psychologist*.

93. *Ibid.*

94. David G. Myers, 2000. "The Funds, Friends, and Faith of Happy People." *American Psychologist* vol. 55 no. 1 (January): 61.

95. Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). 2001. "What's This Doing To The Kids?" FRONTLINE: *Merchants of Cool*. See *www.pbs.org/frontline/shows/cool*

96. Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted in Council on Civil Society. 1998. *A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths*. (New York, NY: Institute for American Values): 8.

97. See, for example, data cited in letter of Senators Lieberman, McCain, Byrd, and Brownback to William Kennard, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, May 25, 2000. Available under Press Releases at *www.senate.gov/member/ct/lieberman/*

98. *Ibid.*

99. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising." Policy Statement RE 9504. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 2 (February): 295-297.

100. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1999. "Media Education." Policy Statement RE 9911. *Pediatrics* vol. 104 no. 2 (August): 341-343.

101. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. 2001. "Executive Summary." *Sex On TV2: Content and Context*. (Menlo Park, CA: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation). (February). Available at *www.kff.org*

102. Donald J. Cook, Clarice Kestenbaum, L. Michael Honaker, and E. Ratcliffe Anderson, Jr. 2000. "Joint Statement on the Impact of Entertainment Violence On Children." Consensus document regarding the connection between media and agressive behavior in Children. (July 26). Available at: *www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jstmtevc.htm*

103. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Media Violence." Policy Statement RE 9526. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 6 (June): 949-951. See *www.aap.org*

104. American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Article Underscores Media Impact On Children And Adolescents." Press release. (January 5). See *www.aap.org*

105. Mary Pipher. 1999. "Foreword." In Jean Kilbourne. 1999. *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes The Way We Think and Feel*. (New York, NY: Touchstone): 13.

106. David Walsh. "A Culture of Disrespect." Statement on the National Institute on Media and the Family's website. Available at *www.mediafamily.org*

107. James U. McNeal. 1999. *The Kids Market: Myths and Realities* (Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market Publishing). The quotes in the text are taken from throughout the book, but see especially pages 15, 18, 32, 37, and 202.

108. See brochure for "Marketing To Families Online & Offline: Reaching the Gatekeepers and Persuading the Influencers," a conference sponsored by the Institute for International Research, January 22-24, 2001, noting that "mothers are the family gatekeepers..." See *www.iirnyc.com*

109. Sara Ruddick. 1995. *Maternal Thinking: Toward A Politics of Peace*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press): xx.

110. Neil Postman. 1994. *The Disappearance of Childhood*. (New York, NY: Vintage Books): 151.

111. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy. 1999. *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection.* (New York: Pantheon Books): 392-393.

112. Donald F. Roberts, Ulla G. Foehr, Victoria J. Rideout and Mollyann Brodie. 1999. *Kids & Media @ The New Millennium: A Comprehensive National Analysis of Children's Media Use.* (Menlo Park, CA: the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation): 81.

113. Quoted in Peggy Crowley. 2000. "To Market, To Market." *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, NJ) (February 20).

114. Johann Wachs. 1999. "Industry Experts: A Farewell To Charms: Kid Marketing And The Challenge of Difference." *PR & Marketing Network* (May 26). See *www.prandmarketing.com*

115. Jean Kilbourne, 1999. *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes The Way We Think and Feel.* (New York, NY: Touchstone): 55, 306.

116. Juliet Schor. 1998. *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need.* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial): 24.

117. See for example: Barbara Meltz. 2000. "Consumer mania: Creating kids who are hip to the hype." *The Boston Globe* (September 14): H3; Naomi Klein. 1999. *No Logo: Taking Aim At The Brand Bullies.* (New York, NY: Picador); Kalle Lasn. 1999. *Culture Jam: How To Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge — And Why We Must.* (New York, NY: Quill); David Walsh. 1994. *Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profits Before Values and What Parents Can Do.* (Minneapolis, MN: Fairview Press); David Walsh. 1990. *Designer Kids: Consumerism and Competition — When Is It All Too Much* (Minneapolis, MN: Deaconess Press); Diane E. Levin. 1998. *Remote Control Childhood: Combating The Hazards of Media Culture* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children); Diane E. Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige. 1994. "Developmentally Appropriate Television: Putting Children First." *Young Children* (July): 38; Johann Cristoph Arnold. 2000. *Endangered: Your Child in a Hostile World.* (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House); David G. Myers. 2000. *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty.* (New Haven: Yale University Press); Adbusters: *www.adbusters.org*; Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin. 1990. *Who's Calling the Shots: How to Respond to Children's Fascination with War Play and War Toys.* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers); and Chyng Feng Sun. *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood, and Corporate Power.* (North Hampton, MA: Media Education Foundation). Available from *www.mediaed.org*

118. According to psychologist David Myers, "researchers have studied how to immunize young children so they can more effectively analyze and evaluate television commercials...In one such effort, the children were inoculated by viewing ads and discussing them." See David G. Myers. Forthcoming 2002. *Social Psychology* 7th Edition. (Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw-Hill).

119. See for example Center for Media Education, *www.cme.org*; Center for a New American Dream, *www.newdream.org*; Commercial Alert, *www.commercialalert.org*; Center for Commercial-Free Public Education, *www.commercialfree.org*; Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education, *www.schoolcommercialism.org*; Obligation, Inc., *www.obligation.org*; New York Coalition for Commercialfree Schools 1-800-UNPLUG or (718) 398-9324; Media Education Foundation, *www.mediaed.org*; Media Knowledge, *www.mediaknowledge.org*; Lion & Lamb Project, *www.lionlamb.org*; TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment) *www.wheelock.edu/truce/truce.htm*

120. ZapMe! was a corporation that offered schools free computers in return for the right to show ads and gather information on children while they surfed the Internet. See Commercial Alert. 2000. "Coalition Asks States to Protect Children from ZapMe! Corp. Privacy Invasion, and Wants Corporations to Sever Partnerships with ZapMe!" News Release (January 19). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/releases/zapmepackrel.html*; and Schiffman, Betsy. 2000. "ZapMe! Kills Computers in the Classroom." *Forbes.com* (Nov. 28). Available at *www.forbes.com/2000/11/28/11227Zapme.html*

N2H2 was a company that made a web filtering software that gathered data on children as they surfed the Internet and sold the information to marketers and the Defense Department. See: Commercial Alert. 2001. "Commercial Alert Calls Web-Filter Company N2H2 a 'Corporate Predator,' Asks Defense Sec. Rumsfeld Not to Hire N2H2 to Spy on American Schoolchildren." News Release (January 29). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/releases/Can2h2rel.html*; and Commercial Alert. 2001. "Victory: N2H2 halts schoolroom snooping." Press Release (February 22). Available at *lists.essential.org/pipermail/commercial-alert/2001/000067.html*

121. See: Center for Commercial-Free Public Education, *www.commercialfree.org*; Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education, *www.schoolcommercialism.org*; Obligation, Inc., *www.obligation.org*; New York Coalition for Commercialism in Schools, 1-800-UNPLUG or (718) 398-9324; Media Education Foundation, *www.mediaed.org*; Media Knowledge, *www.mediaknowledge.org*; and New Mexico Media Literacy Project, *www.nmmlp.org*.

122. See Harrah's Entertainment Marketing and Advertising Code. Available from: Harrah's Entertainment, 5100 West Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89146 or *www.harrahs.com*. Note that the "American Academy of Pediatrics believes that advertising directed toward children is inherently deceptive and exploits children under the age of 8." See American Academy of Pediatrics. 1995. "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising." Policy Statement RE9504. *Pediatrics* vol. 95 no. 2 (February): 295-297.

123. See *www.jhcc.harvard.edu*

124. See Commercial Alert's "How Government Can Shield Kids: Empowering the FTC to Protect Kids." Available on *www.commercialalert.org/ftc/index.html*. It should be noted that a number of countries in Europe have strict restrictions on marketing to children. Greece, for example, bans toy advertising on TV between the hours of 7 am and 10 pm. Sweden, which recently assumed the presidency of the European Union, has put at the top of its cultural priorities the issue of "protection of minors from harmful media content." See Christopher Brown-Humes. 2001. "Survey — Creative Business: Advertising & Children." *Financial Times* (January 17). Available at *www.globalarchive.ft.com/*

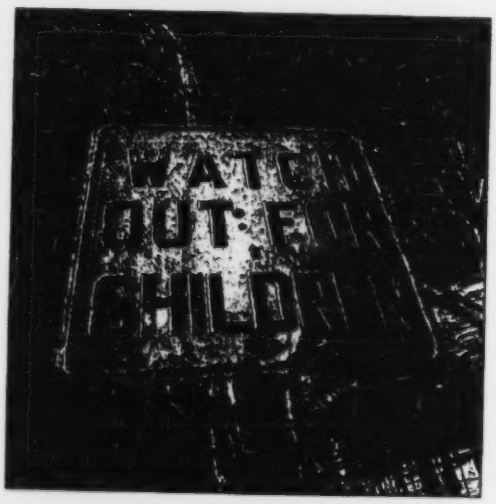
125. Commercial Alert. 1999. Letter to The Honorable Dennis Hastert, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives and to The Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader, United States Senate (October 12). Available at *www.commercialalert.org/ftccoallet.html*

126. See letter of Senators Lieberman, McCain, Byrd, and Brownback to William Kennard, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, May 25, 2000. Available under Press Releases at *www.senate.gov/member/ct/lieberman/*

127. As noted in *A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths* "Free markets, like the free societies they are intended to support, depend for their existence on the overall health of civil society. As they make future decisions, we hope that business and labor leaders will remember this truth. Economic activities that weaken communities or assault the integrity of childhood might not always reveal their ill effects in the short run, but the task of sustaining civil society requires a disciplined commitment to the long run. We especially urge leaders in business to recognize the moral dimensions of the decisions they make. We hope that they might act as if their own children were the ones most directly affected by these decisions." See Council on Civil Society. 1998. *A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths*. (New York, NY: Institute for American Values): 24.

About the Cover

This battered and weather-beaten sign is located on South Brooksvale Road in Cheshire, Connecticut. It is a powerful metaphor for our society's inattentiveness to the vital work of watching out for children.



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About the Motherhood Project

The mission of the Motherhood Project of the Institute for American Values is to put the importance of motherhood on the national agenda and to foster a renewed sense of purpose, passion, and power in the vocation of motherhood. Through its Mothers' Council – a group of mothers of diverse perspectives – the Motherhood Project seeks to help [and] mothers in an exploration of the qualities necessary to raise children in an age shaped by the values of commerce and technology. A key goal of the Mothers' Councils is to promote national conversations on issues of vital concern to mothers.

About the Institute for American Values

The Institute for American Values, founded in 1987, is a private, nonpartisan organization devoted to contributing intellectually to the renewal of marriage and family life and sources of competence, character, and citizenship in the United States. Institute activities are more than debates about policy. They are also conversations about culture and explorations of the American idea.

By providing forums for scholarly inquiry and debate, the Institute seeks to bring fresh knowledge to bear on the challenges facing families and civil society. Through its publications and other educational activities, the Institute seeks to bridge the gap between scholarship and policy making, bringing new information and analyses to the attention of policy makers in government, opinion makers in the media, and decision makers in the private sector and in civil society.

The Institute has become widely recognized as an important contributor to our national debate. The Institute has an annual budget of about $1,000,000 and is financed primarily by tax-deductible contributions from foundations and individuals. It also receives income from the sale of publications.

The Institute's president is David Blankenhorn. The Chair of its Board of Directors is Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain of the University of Chicago. The Institute's Council on Families, its Council on Civil Society, its Mothers' Council, and its academic and professional advisory committees bring together more than 100 of the nation's most distinguished scholars and analysts from across the human sciences and from across the political spectrum.

Institute for American Values

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